

LadyLike

A Tasteful Magazine for Crossdressers with Class

#27
\$10

*Pictorial:
Night Of A
Thousand Gowns*

The Problem

*TV
Video
Review*

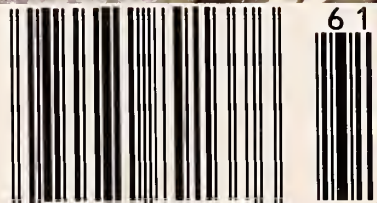
*Out of
the Closet*

*Fun on
the High Seas*

Kaye's Kcorner

*plus... 16 pages
in full color!*

*Profile:
Diane
Van
Horne*



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Editorial

A Short Quiz

Reading *LadyLike* can be:

1. An interesting diversion.
2. Indulgent entertainment and then put away.
3. A journey of discovery.

Answer: All of the above, but I like 3.

Far too often in the years I've been involved with the transgender community, I've talked to men who were strongly attracted to crossdressing — but they couldn't make themselves take a step toward fulfilling their fantasy. Many times their reasons for avoiding what they'd most like to do are shame, low self-esteem, or paranoia. Those who let reasons like this keep them from their personal journey of discovery are making a mistake. I've had too many people tell me, "If only I'd started to dress x years ago."

Once, I was masqueraded as just a "regular guy." Secretly, I longed to wear women's clothes. But I kept up a good facade. While not acting completely macho, I presented a masculine face to the world at all times, and worried that if I spent too much time on any "feminine" pursuit (as a child, I wouldn't even read a book that had a heroine instead of a hero) I would be spotted as not being a "regular guy."

Well, all the worry and hiding exacts a toll. This part of your personality, that should really be no big deal, begins to hang over you like a dark cloud. What nature gave us as a path to follow on a journey of discovery becomes a private albatross around the neck, holding us in a kind of frozen reality where we act out our male role while we long to try on the female role. The suppression of what I feel to be a natural urge can cause us a lot of pain and that can cause problems.

I call the state of mind that keeps us from exploring the other side of the fence "gender inertia." We're used to being and acting male. It's *difficult* to cross the gender border. The clothes feel different. You haven't learned the fashion and grooming skills that women have spent a lifetime learning and you don't look like Marilyn Monroe either. (Is that lipstick on your front teeth?) It the beginning, we feel silly. Most often when we first dress up (in the privacy of our own heavily secured home), we *do* look silly. Don't let that stop you.

Even after years of crossdressing, gender inertia still crops up. If I haven't dressed for a week or so it takes an effort of will (not gigantic, I'll admit) to cross the gender border and appear feminine in public. The thought of removing vast amounts of untamed body hair begins to

take on a titanic aura. As I put on my makeup my hands seem to be immense and definitely unfeminine. Even though I go out often with no problems, if I haven't dressed for awhile, it takes an hour or two of being out in public to make me comfortable in my femme role.

To the new crossdresser, gender inertia can be an immense obstacle. By giving-in to the inertia, crossdressing can begin to take on too much importance. Since you can't do it, you think about it all the time, and thinking about *anything* all the time can make anyone a bit wacky. Crossdressing itself is not a mental problem. Becoming obsessed with crossdressing can certainly lead to mental problems.

The answer; give yourself permission to be who you are. If you see someone's picture in the Profile and say "Boy, I wish I looked like her," remember—she didn't look like that from the beginning. No doubt she made an effort, possibly consulted a friendly beautician or had help from a sympathetic girlfriend. In order to get that help, even the most minimal, like a makeup book from the library, she had to take a chance. She had to come into contact with someone else in the wide world. A librarian who *might* wonder why a man wanted a book on women's makeup, a salesperson who *might* wonder what that fella was going to do with that dress, or a cosmetics person who *might* wonder what that guy is doing buying all that makeup. None of these worries are anything but "mights." Learn to be comfortable with who you are. (Not that simple, I know.)

So, while it can be many things, let *Ladylike* be a step on your journey of discovery. We're here so you can contact people like our advertisers (all very TG friendly), and support groups all around the country. Give yourself permission and take control of your crossdressing desires. Crossdressing is a gift or a curse. Which is up to you.

Okay, "Momma" Angela is done with her lecture. Wait a minute young lady. You're not going out in *that* dress. You march right up to your room and read this issue of *LadyLike*.

Angela Gardner



LadyLike

A Tasteful Magazine for Crossdressers with Class

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Credits: Carolyn Durrell, photo by Dana B., NYC
Inset: Diane Van Horne by Stellar Photography

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Diane Van Horne



LadyLike Profile

NAME: Diane Van Horne

AGE: 35

PROFESSION: Analyst

RESIDENCE: Washington, D.C.

HEIGHT: 6' 0"

WEIGHT: 165#

MEASUREMENTS: Padding-31-More Padding

SHOE SIZE: 10W

FAVORITE THINGS

SHOE STYLE: Low-heeled pumps

PERFUME: Charlie & Eliz. Arden

MOVIE: West Side Story, Crying Game

STYLES: Party dresses with exposed shoulders/arms

MUSIC: A little bit of everything

PLACE: A warm bed on a cold night with someone I love.

TURN-ONS: Back-rubs, flattery, humor, Margaritas, and having my ear nibbled.

TURN-OFFS: Drugs, tattoos, child pornography, unprotected sex, and promiscuity.



LadyLike: You crossdressed early in childhood, but something happened that kept “Diane” locked away for a long time. Tell us about that.

Diane Van Horne: For as long as I remember, I’ve had fantasies about being magically transformed into a female. In fact, one of my earliest childhood memories is of a playmate who told me that if I could kiss my elbow I would turn into a girl. I was pretty gullible, and tried very hard to make it work. I must have spent the better part of the year trying to stretch my lips. I’m surprised I didn’t grow up to look like Steve Tyler.

Anyhow, I used to follow my mom around quite a bit; you might say I studied her. When I watched her get dressed or put on make-up I was fascinated. I’m sure she picked-up on my interest in femininity. She was tolerant in the beginning, or perhaps she simply believed I was going through a stage. Either way, she said very little about my actions until one particular day. I was eight or nine years old, and I went to put some of my dirty laundry in the clothes hamper. As you’ve probably guessed by now, I came across a pair of her panties and nylons. The first day, I was content just holding them to feel their

special softness. However, after a night of laying in bed dwelling on how they made me feel, I decided to try them on the next morning. I took them with me and went into the bathroom. I locked the door, and proceeded to roll the stockings up my legs. I was in heaven as you can imagine, but my ecstasy was pretty short. You see, our bathroom was situated at the top of our staircase, and anyone coming up the stairs could see through the crack between the bathroom door and the floor. My mother observantly picked up the fact I was wearing pantyhose, and became very upset. She ranted for a long time about homosexuality and mental illness. I know now she raged out of ignorance on a subject that was taboo to a daughter of a Southern Baptist minister. However, after her heartfelt lecture, she convinced me I had sinned against God, and was probably in need of serious psychological help. After the initial eruption, Mom never yelled at me again about it, and if there was a “good” side to the incident, she never (to my knowledge) shared what happened with my father.

Over the next few years we were cordial, but I felt we had lost something in our relationship. I have brothers



ality still has a great deal of hang ups. I am working everyday to improve that, but I still have a ways to go. Fortunately, I don't feel like I have to prove I'm "He-Man, Master of the Universe" anymore.

LL: Eventually, you married, but you never told your wife about your fantasies?

DVH: Almost all of the crossdressers I've talked to either have told their wives about their dressing, or have a burning desire to do so. I never did, and honestly can say I never wanted to. I love being a woman, but I feel the same way about being a male. I'm greedy.

I want to look like Jaclyn Smith. But, when a woman sees me as a male, I want her to lust after me like I was Harrison Ford. I don't want her to see me as a soul mate she is tolerant of. I'm sure that kind of relationship is rewarding and wonderful, but it's not what I was looking for in life, then or now.

LL: You said you were critical of transgender lifestyles, but your attitude changed. Why?

DVH: My feelings towards gays and gender-benders changed as I became more educated on the subject, and my self-confidence matured. I acted like a jerk because I

who were very athletic and popular with girls. She seemed to favor them much more than me. Perhaps it was just a figment of my imagination.

My mother passed away when I was fourteen, but that just increased my determination to be the kind of son she wanted me to be. I know my mother loved me, but to this day I have doubts of whether she was ever proud of me. I try not to dwell on it anymore.

LL: You joined the service. Do you think this was a way of trying to bolster your masculinity?

DVH: I had very specific reasons for joining the military and if proving my masculinity was one of them, it was deep in my subconscious. However, once I joined, I pulled many stunts that were purely macho acts to prove I "belonged." Excessive drinking, womanizing, contact sports, bigotry, and abusive attitudes were a normal way of life. Sometimes I feel like the St. Paula of crossdressing. I was heavy into persecution. In particular, I was anti-gay, anti-feminist, and anti-transgenderist. I'm not proud of the way I acted then. I can only say I was immature and ignorant. Not only was I trying desperately to convince others of my ultra-conservatism, I was trying to convince myself. To this day, the male half of my person-



thought that was the way I was supposed to act. I was paranoid that if anyone knew I went to bed wishing I had been born a girl, I was going to end up, at the very least, disgraced and humiliated, probably committed to an institution, and possibly even court marshaled.

Fortunately, television realized that crossdressers made for good daytime program ratings. So, I became more educated about different gender lifestyles through Phil Donahue and other shows. But, it was a couple of fictional characters that helped me most. I was a big fan of the television shows *Soap*, which starred Billy Crystal as a gay man, and *Bosom Buddies*, with Tom Hanks and Peter Scolari as crossdressers. I realize these character weren't perfect role models, but they allowed me to see gays and crossdressers in a positive light. They were bright, up-beat, talented, kind-hearted people with a wonderful sense of humor about themselves. I don't mean to imply I hadn't seen other actors perform in drag or play homosexuals. They were plentiful, but I just connected with these particular characters.

LL: Your desire to crossdress had not been a problem during your marriage, but you divorced for other reasons. What happened after that?



DVH: I still had a credit card with both our names on the account. I received quite a bit of mail addressed to my ex-wife, Diane. (Now you know how I got my name — I wouldn't have picked it, but it's grown on me.) Included with the junk mail, were catalogs from Frederick's, Victoria's Secret, Newport News, etc. The first time I browsed one, I told myself I just wanted to see the gorgeous models. But somewhere along the line I snapped. I figured I was on my own, and free to do what I wanted for the first time in my life. Why not act out a few fantasies in private? Who could get hurt? If wearing a nightgown to bed wasn't everything I dreamed it to be, I could quit right there.

The day of my first order is very vivid to me. I had the order form in my hand, standing in front of the mailbox for about ten minutes trying to talk myself into dropping it in. I had visions of a secret service agent hidden inside the box waiting for me to let go of the envelope. I finally just said, "Hey, it's now or never," and let go; both physically and emotionally. I ordered a black silk nightgown, and just about died from excitement the day it arrived. Soon make-up, clothes, and a wig were on the way.

The more I ordered, the more catalogs were sent. I even bought a voice modulator, so I could shop by





seemed to be too committal, so I decided on an event. There were a bunch, too, but, as you know, I picked Paradise in the Poconos. I did so for a few reasons. First, the timing was good, but that was minor. Second, the others all seemed to have a political agenda, which I wasn't looking for. Third, I knew you through your books and articles, and wanted to meet you.

But, the biggest selling point was the seclusion of the location. I had these awful images of going to the others, and having Connie Chung shove a microphone in my face and asking "So, Ms. Van Horne, can you tell us how long you've been a TV working for the government?" I know, I know, my imagination gets carried away.

Anyhow, I am so glad I went to the Poconos. I just loved every person I met. There was a nice mix of younger and older ladies, a nice mix of heavy partying and total relaxation, and a nice mix of fun and education. There was no pressure to do anything, but plenty of help to accomplish the goals I had set for myself. Simply put, I have never spent my money more wisely than I did when I signed up for the Poconos weekend.

LL: Looking back over your life, would you do anything differently?

phone without being read. I refer to this time in my life as my crash course in femininity. If I could only have one year of my life to live over again, Oct. '93 to Oct. '94 would be the period I'd choose. I can't imagine feeling any happier, than I felt during that period. You are only a debutante once, so you should enjoy every second.

LL: How did you finally come out?

DVH: I was lucky to find *LadyLike* and *Tapestry* magazines. Through them, I found pen-pals and a transformation service. Before I knew it, I had all the connections a young woman could hope to find. I've already referred to myself as "St. Paula", but in respect to finding the gender community, I guess I'm a little more like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. I dreamt of a far off place that I once heard about in a fairy tale, and then one day... **Boom!** I'm right dab in the middle of Emerald City. The big difference is I'm in no hurry to get back to Kansas.

My first step was a transformation service. My confidence was boosted immensely by having let someone else meet Diane, but I knew I still had more hurdles to jump, and the next one was to make face-to-face contact with other sisters. I could accomplish that in one of two ways — join a club or go to an event. Joining a club



DVH: You know, it's amusing you should ask me that. Yes, there are some regrets. But I have reflected back on my life many times, and wondered where would I be if this or that had or hadn't happened. First, I have to say, I love my life just the way it is now. If I could change anything, I'd like to erase every event in my life that caused hurt to someone else long before I'd worry about anything to do with my gender. True, there are still many nights when I wished my fantasies about changing sexes had come true, and I had experienced going to the prom in a beautiful dress. Or, I just wish I knew what it was like to grow up from a tomboy, to a young girl, to a mature woman. I don't think you can be a crossdresser without having those thoughts now and then. But, I was raised to believe people should be thankful for what they do have, rather than crying about what they don't. I won't say my life would have been worse if I had taken hormones at age 8, and had SRS at age 14, because I would have made the best out of any situation. However, I don't know how my life could have turned out much better than I have it now. I have a wonderful family, terrific job, great friends, and I truly have the best of both worlds. What more could a girl wish for?



LL: I see you're getting involved with a local group. What do you think you can contribute?

DVH: You're referring to my column in the *Virginia's Secret* newsletter, "The Hollywood Dresser." I focus on the connection between the entertainment industry and our community. There's not much of a message in the article besides I can gossip with the best of them. So many of the girls that get involved in our community have a political agenda. Sadly, I feel we are splitting ourselves too thin by demanding too much, and becoming too sub-group oriented. All I ask out of life is that if I'm not hurting anyone else, I should be able to enjoy the feminine side of my character without persecution. The truth is, thanks to the early pioneers and gender outlaws, I don't think that we are too far from that now, depending where you live. However, let me say I'm still learning, and I'm still formulating opinions on many subjects.

In the meantime, my agenda is to help as many people as possible to **enjoy** their dressing. You'd be surprised how many of the girls lose sight of the fun. I'm sure there are plenty of us out there to organize marches, or host a group therapy session. I'd rather have my girlfriends over for a luncheon, or a makeover session, or a slumber party. Anything to get a good giggle about.

LL



Girl Talk

with JoAnn Roberts

***Girl Talk is your
forum. Any
question on
any topic is
fair game,
from makeup
secrets to the
psychology of
transgendered
behavior.***

***If I don't have an
answer, I'll find
someone who does.
Write me care of this
magazine with your
questions.
I just love mail.***

Dear JoAnn,
I tried your glue-stick trick to block out my eyebrows, but it doesn't seem to work for me. Got any other suggestions?

Toni, Calif.

Dear Toni,

A friend of mine suggested liquid latex available from craft and hobby stores. paint the laxter over your brows building up the coverage in layers. Then cover with foundation and draw in new brows. I'd be worried, though, about pulling out my eyebrows.

Another friend suggested mustache wax. Get thee to a theatrical supply house and buy this product. You work the wax into the brows and cover with foundation and powder. By the way, the wax is easy to remove.

Dear JoAnn,

I would like to know how to open a checking account and get a credit card in my femme name.

Carolyn, N.Y.

Dear Carolyn,

In theory, you can open a checking account in any name you like at any bank. In practice, it depends on the bank and how nit-picky they are about using a pseudonym. One person told me their bank would allow them to have their femme name on a check but that they would also have an A.K.A. with their real name which defeats the whole purpose of the account. Some people open an account using just initials for the first and middle names.

As for credit cards, it's easier. Call your credit card company and tell them that you want a second card in the name of (your femme name) and you guarantee that you will pay the bills. That's all it takes.

Dear JoAnn,

I currently wear a size 12 and my clothes always fit me well. I was shopping in a thrift store recently and found a gorgeous designer suit that looks like its from the 1960s. I bought it, but when I got it home it didn't fit. What happened?

Trina, Va.

Dear Trina,

You've been caught by downsizing. No, not the corporate kind, the fashion kind. The fashion industry recognizes that American women are getting larger and consequently they're making clothes larger. But, fearing loss of sales, they also revise the size charts. So what is today a size 12 was a 14 three years ago and in the 1960s might have been an 18 or a 20! Conversely, your 1960s size 12 is more like a size 6 today. Always take a cloth tape measure with you when thrift shopping and measure the waistline. That's the best way to get a handle on what size the garment is by today's standards.

Dear JoAnn,

I have just signed up with Compuserve and want to get out on the Internet. Where can I find good transgender information on the net? Please sign me...

Newbie, Md.

Dear Newbie,

I'm not sure we have enough space to give you **all** the places to go, but we'll give you good places to start.

First, there's a Gender Forum on Cserve itself. Go to the Human Sexuality Forum (Go HSX) and you'll have to look around for the "special" forums. You have to sign an agreement before they will give you access. All of the major on-line services (Cserve, AOL, and Prodigy) have gender-related forums. All of the major on-line services (Cserve, AOL, and Prodigy) also give you several types of access to the internet, i.e., email, Usenet, and the WorldWide Web.

With just email you can get a lot of information through mailing lists which are much like electronic newsletters that appear in your email box. Ask someone in your local forum for the address of a gender related list.

Next we have the Usenet or newsgroups. Last time I looked there were over 16,000 newsgroups on every imaginable subject. Usually the ones you would want won't be listed, but each service allows you to request

access to any newsgroup by manually entering its name. The two newsgroups of interest to you are <alt.transgendered> and <soc.support.transgendered>. (Don't type in the <> brackets.)

Finally we come to the Web which has cause an Internet explosion. Your online service will provide you with a web browser and a connection to the web. There are literally hundreds of gender related web sites. The best place for you to start (in my humble opinion) is at <<http://www.cdspub.com>>. From here you can go to the Transgender Forum, a weekly e-zine; the Community Center for info on a support group; or the CDS Resource Guide. Choose the Resource Guide and go to the Community Resources page. There you will find links to sites all over the world. and those sites link to other sites and those to others and on and on. Hey, that's why it's called WorldWide.

Here are a few URLs (addresses) of other www sites. Make sure you type them **exactly** as shown.

Above & Beyond Mall

<http://www.abmal.com>

CD Forum

<http://www.swcp.com/~therev/cdf.html>

Transgender Forum

<http://www.tgforum.com/content1.html>

Gender Talk

<http://world.std.com/~nrn>

Northbound Leather

<http://www.northbound.com>

Romantasy

<http://www.romantasy.com>

RuPaul Page

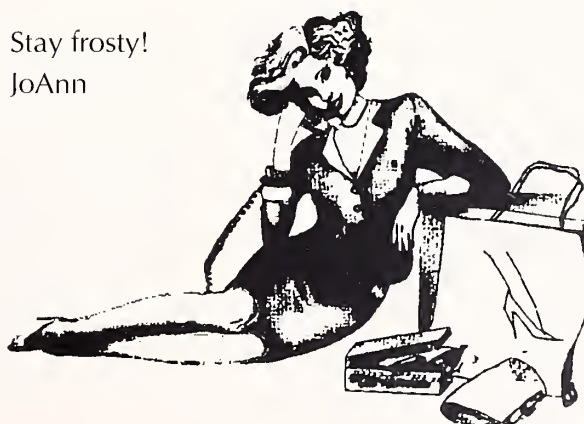
<http://www.cyber-dine.com/~tprebble/rupaul/>

Transexual Menace

<http://www.echonyc.com/~degrey/Menace.html>

Stay frosty!

JoAnn





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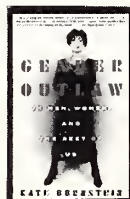


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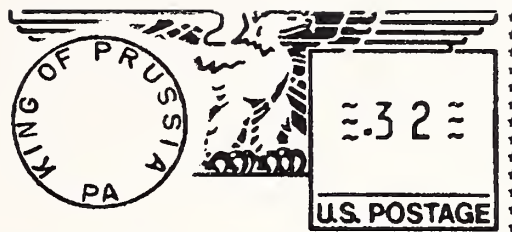
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Letters



She Measures Up

I just adore your magazine. It's so positive and professional. I really want to thank you for printing my photos. It always seems to be the same girls who regularly submit pictures. When I first received *LadyLike* I thought I couldn't "measure up" to everyone else who had been doing this for years.

Well it's not a matter of measuring up. It's how you feel about yourself. A photo is reassuring yourself that you are who you are, a reminder that there is this wonderfully sensitive person who wants to **be**! So I look at all the photos and see the faces of wonderful human beings. I hope more girls realize no one is grading you.

Love, Brenda M. Altman



Brenda

Relief But No Acceptance

I happened to obtain a copy of *LadyLike* accidentally. I found it to be tastefully prepared with informative articles. Of particular interest were the

letters to the editor. I felt relief learning there are others in the world that, like me, have had to struggle to get in touch with their feminine personalities.

I have been able to discover the inner strength to tell my wife and although she professes to understand, she does not accept my new image.

I see your magazine as a tool of empowerment where I can find support as well as technical information. Hopefully by making new friends and even attending a retreat, I'll muster the courage to tell the rest of the family so that I can begin to live the life I feel inside. I wish that there was a support group nearby that could be a source of encouragement and a help to cross-dressing. Then someday I'll be able to send you a photo for publication of a successful transformation.

Grant, Mich.

The closest group to you is in Petoskey. It's called the Northwest Michigan Gender Society at PO Box 271, Petoskey, MI 49770. It's still not right around the corner but it is very helpful to attend support groups meetings. Good luck

Inspired

It has been two years since I found you—and I'm very glad I did! Through the inspiration of your publications I have learned to feel better about who I am, and what I do. Therefore I am going to inch my way out of the closet.

Terna

PS: I have shared your materials with my wife, and it has made a difference in her acceptance.



Terna

Sobered Up

I never thought that I would be sitting here (all dressed up) writing to you, or anyone for that matter. I am a life long TV. My first experience with dressing was when I was only six years old. At that time I never would have thought I would still be dressing at 37. That is the problem and the reason for this letter.

Over the years I have started and stopped more times than I can count. I got married 10 years ago to a great girl and we have two great kids, mostly because of my wife. Through the first five years of our marriage I was drunk most of the time. However, for the last four and a half years I have not touched any of that. During my active drinking days my dressing was on and off, and when I did dress I usually was not drunk. My wife was supportive of my dressing to the point of buying things for me, from underwear to makeup, and even a wig. She also helped me with my makeup at first and even did my nails on occasion. I went through a very submissive stage at this time, catering to my wife. She really enjoyed it at the time, however, for the wrong reasons. I believe she liked it so much

continued on page 15



FRANKEL TRAVEL ASSOCIATES

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Letters

because I was home and not out drinking with my friends.

During the last few years I have not dressed as often because our girls are older and around more, and as I was not working I could not spend the extra money. I have also fought the "urge" to dress, even told myself I could stop — after all, I quit drinking. The last four or five months have been real tough. I have been going to the book store to buy new magazines and boy are they great. Your's is one of my favorites.

Well, to get to the purpose of this letter, I have made a decision to get some real help to understand this condition. My attitude has changed, and I no longer want to hide behind closed doors or waste anymore of my life. I told my wife about my decision and even told her I was going to write to you for several of your publications. She has not told me how she feels, however, I think she is as confused as I am. I am not sure where this will end, or even if it will. All I know is I have got to get started now.

One last comment, to your young readers, don't waste time like I have. It will not go away. Get help before you get involved with someone and run the risk of hurting people you really love. I hope, with a little luck and a lot more love, my wife and I can work this out together.

Your Sister, Nikki

Don't worry too much about where "it will end." Remember, you are in charge of your crossdressing. The important thing is, you have made a decision to not let it rule you, as a secret so often can. By giving yourself permission to dress and working on an agreement with your spouse while keeping her concerns in mind, you are on the way to a much better time in your life.

Once Not Enough

Even though I've only had one chance to dress fully this year, I find myself driven to express my femininity more and more. I've let my nails grow to the point where mine are longer than every woman in my office except one. I find myself preoccupied with trying to adopt feminine mannerisms and the drive is getting stronger.

I want to thank you again for publishing my pictures in issues #22 and #24. You even printed my question in Girl Talk. They (the pictures) have been a big boost to my self-esteem.

You said in your last letter that "passing is relatively unimportant." But, isn't it our ultimate goal? Why would we spend hours and hours on makeup, deportment, voice, clothes, etc., if not to achieve the goal of blending into womanhood and have the looks and stares and questions of gender vanish? I know most of us can't ever reach that goal but at least we can strive to narrow the gap and maybe blur the edges.



Beverly

I really enjoy the Profile section and I especially enjoy the early experience questions. The photograph taken over a period of years, like in Linda Lewis's Profile were very good. How about a lingerie section? Call it Ladies-n-Lace.

Anyway, I hope to contact a support group this year but I'll have to keep anonymous until I'm sure that my security is not jeopardized. Again, thank you for a first class publication that I

can be proud to show my face in.

Sincerely, Beverly

*It's a shame you don't get out more than once a year, Bev. From your pictures I can tell you are a very attractive lady. Speaking from experience, both my own and that of others, the more you are able dress the less of a preoccupation it will become. You need to express your femininity and know that you will be able to do so regularly. You say you need to maintain your security but your nails are longer than the ladies at work. This is **not** the way to stay in the closet. Don't wait too long, find a support group in your area and start attending meetings. No one in a support group will do anything to jeopardize your security—we're all in the same boat.*

When JoAnn says that passing is unimportant she means that if you concentrate on passing to the extent that it keeps you from going out and having fun, then you are missing something. By all means, most of us want to present our most feminine face to the world, but it is impossible to fool all the people all the time. Don't let stares or questions stop you. If you pause to answer people's questions, you are a good ambassador for the transgender community.

Table Fare

Just would like to let you know that I think you're doing a super job with LadyLike. It has really turned out to be a first class magazine. I've often said that it was the one TV publication one could leave on their coffee table next to the National Geographic!

Just had to tell you how pleased I am with the quality of your magazine and hope that you will continue for many more years.

Best Regards, Linda Coulter

continued on page 16

Better Understanding

Your magazine has opened many new and exciting doors for me. I grew up in a very conservative community in Utah and for years felt that I was one of a kind. Since finding your wonderful magazine and learning of the sisterhood that actually exists I've been able to come to a better understanding of myself. This greater understanding and acceptance of my needs and desire to become a woman has enabled me to enjoy a freedom that I would never have dared to express before. I only wish that I knew in my teens what I know now. I think it is unfortunate that your magazine cannot be sold to minors. It would have made my growing up a lot easier.

Sincerely, Melanie Okubo



Melanie

Can't Find Any Sisters

I am writing to you from Latvia. I know very few TVs in my country, and not a single person who might be like me. People are reluctant here to make friendships. I have put a number of ads in the local newspapers (we have no t-press here) and the replies are mostly aroused men eager to strike up a relationship which I have no desire for.

I have a family, but my wife is not supportive. I told her before we married but she did not take it seriously.

So, I am a lone crossdresser in an ignorant and sometimes hostile community. Riga, the capital city, has sometimes been a place for me to disappear in a crowd, but mostly that means losing identity than getting confidence.

I am writing you because I obtained a copy of your *Art & Illusion* written a decade ago. Have you or anyone else written more encouraging materials like your guide? Has the theory of crossdressing made much progress in your country? I imagined that there ought to be publications like that, but I was shocked by the *reality*. Could I please have a copy of something that you have written over those years?

The one thing I find difficult to solve is cosmetics — the only American name I can find here is Wet 'n Wild (and it's not very good). I have problems with beard cover, which I think is the most important. My beard is very heavy and a thing I hate. I cannot do a daytime makeup as too much paint is required.

I have a tiny salary compared to a European or an American. In fact, I can buy next to nothing. I do not have a bank account as almost all money is paid for food and I feel sorry for my wife who cannot but things.

This first thing I need is more information — even a back issue of a magazine or pamphlet, a copy, anything. I am determined to form a group here. I have never (as a man) had so much energy for accomplishing an objective as I do now.

I am not an absolute novice in crossdressing, but I started really working on myself a year ago. I can now use your *Art & Illusion* and the illusion is sometimes nice, especially on photos because you do not see my actual size. I am 179 cm (5' 11") and large (in American sizes I would be 16-18). I am 33 years old. I do not have a way to

make pictures at home. The one I am sending was made in one of the shops in the city. I see my mistakes clearly. I cannot relax. I get terrible headaches.

I have another question — how much does erotic mean for an average TV? The t-publications leave an impression that no sex at all is involved, but I can very often feel an erection and I sometimes think I must force an orgasm to get steady — but this is not what I want. I am sorry for writing so much to you for the first time you hear from me, and so chaotically, but I still hope you will understand me.

Yours, Ineta



Ineta

Normally we wouldn't run such a long letter, but I felt it was important for readers here in the U.S. to get a glimpse of what life is like for t-people elsewhere. Last issue we had a similar letter from Poland.

I have sent a copy of LL#25 and the new editions of Art & Illusion to Ineta. If you would like to send her some reading materials or start a correspondence, send your items care of this magazine and include your mailing name and address. I will forward them to Ineta in Latvia — JoAnn

Have a comment for JoAnn or Angela? Send your letters to Editors, LadyLike Magazine, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1263. We love to get mail





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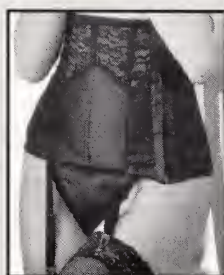
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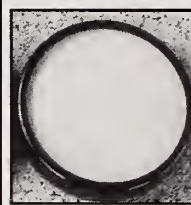
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Then & Now



1925 — Nancy (r.) with brother Stuart.



1978 — Nancy with friend Wendy



1982 — Nancy & Barbara

Nancy Ann Burdick



1994 — Nancy & Debbie



1996 — Nancy Ann Burdick

Kaye's Korner

Relationship Issues with Linda & Vanessa Kaye

Dear Linda & Vanessa,

It's hard enough having a relationship with anyone nowadays, what special problems and joys are raised by adding a partner with transgender issues into the mix?

rying to Decide

Dear Trying,

First of all, let's put this in perspective. If your partner were, let's say, an avid sports fan, would you be asking, "What are the ups and downs of having a football fan for a partner?" We think not. While it is true that being transgendered is different than being a sports nut, it is worth thinking about.

We view transgenderism as a gift, not a flaw. However, along with the gift, there are other factors that will have an impact upon your relationship. Let's take a brief look at a few of the positive and negative aspects. First the negatives.

It's our experience that three issues always seem to surface on the negative side of a transgender relationship if the partners are not in tune with one another. These three issues are: money, time and secrecy.

Money seems to be an "easy target." For example, if the crossdresser wants a pair of breastforms the cost can be anywhere from \$200 to \$500. An expense like this seems frivolous to some partners; however, what if your "sports nut" wanted to fly to the Super Bowl? The cost would be far more than a pair of breastforms; yet it wouldn't be viewed in the same light as purchasing feminine items. Money issues arise in all relationships. You and your partner need to agree on a budget that takes into account your own wants as well as your partner's. There needs to be a fairness, each of you have justified needs as well as wants.

Time. It takes time to get all dressed up! Some partners resent the time taken by the crossdresser. Yet, you must bear in mind that part of the joy for the crossdresser is the transformation process. There are several other issues of time, such as setting aside an evening or day for "her" to "visit." This generally means that you may have to avoid other last minute invitations or arrange for child care. Make it special by having



"her" prepare a candle-lit supper for two.

Secrecy is always an issue. In most cases, your partner is equally concerned about unwanted disclosure as you are. He is not ashamed; however, he does realize that it could cause unnecessary embarrassment, harassment, or alienation of friends and family. You and your partner will have to come to an agreement on who should know, if anyone, and what limits are in order to ensure your own privacy and peace of mind.

Now, let's look at some positive aspects. There is an opportunity here for the two of you to reach a level of intimacy that few couples ever realize. Your partner has a need and desire to express his alternate gender role. S/he is opening up to you and taking a great risk in telling you his deepest, most closely guarded secret. Your acceptance may well be the single most important event in your relationship. It will open new doors for sharing and set the tone for the future.

There are also the benefits of being able to live with the "real" person. Now that you and your partner have completely opened up to one another, you can forget all the games and pretending to be the person you are not. There is an opportunity to establish a special communion of love. Your partner will no longer be afraid to let you know his feelings. In short, if you are able to reach the point where you accept your partner as he/she is, you will become far more than just a "couple." You become life-long friends. This type of bonding and friendship is what is missing in most relationships today.

The key to the success in any relationship, regardless of what one wears is communication. Don't be afraid to express your concerns or your desires. Give your partner the same courtesy you expect from him/her.

In closing, there is one other factor you should consider. If you're in a relationship with a crossdresser, you'll never run out of stockings or make-up!

The Kayes have published a book *Life With Vanessa*. The book deals with many of the issues facing couples in similar relationships. To order your copy send \$11.50 (US only) to M. Kull, 6957 NW Expressway, Suite 121, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.





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National US Organizations

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International Foundation for Gender Education, 123 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154. Publishes TV/TS Tapestry. Reprints and books on TV/TS subjects, other info. Phone: 617-899-2212. A non-profit service organization now accepting memberships at \$25 per year (does not include a Tapestry subscription). <ifge@world.std.com> <<http://www.transgender.org/tg/ifge/index.html>>

Renaissance Education Association, Inc., 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. 610-975-9119 24 hr. answering machine, but phones are answered personally on Monday and Thursday evenings. Membership fee of \$16 includes a 24-page monthly newsletter *Renaissance News & Views*. Also publishes Background Papers and Community Outreach Bulletins on transgender issues for personal and professional use. Speakers available for classroom, corporate, or media discussions of transgender issues. Renaissance currently has four chapters and seven affiliates. Affiliates are noted with "(!)" in the list below. Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization. <bensalem@qpcn.com> <<http://www.cdspub.com/Ren.html>>

Society for the Second Self (SSS), Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Focused on families and relationships. Tri-Ess publishes the *Femme Mirror* quarterly. Tri-Ess chapters are marked with "#" in the list below. Tri-Ess is a non-profit membership organization. <<http://www.firstmethou.com/brenda/>>

Organizations by State, Name, Address, City & Zip code

Alaska

Aloska T People, c/a P.O. Box 670349, Chugiak, 99567

Arizona

Alpha Zeta#, PO Box 1738, Tempe, 85280-1738, <http://users.aol.com/tsjenny/alpha_zo.htm>

California

Alpha#, PO Box 36091, Los Angeles, 90036

Androgyny, PO Box 480740, Los Angeles, 90048, Phone in L.A.: 213-467-8317; [s Shirley@xconn.com]

Barn Free, PO Box 1897, Carono, 91718 [bornfree1@aol.com]

CHIC, PO Box 8487, Long Beach, 90808 [www.transgender.org/tg/chic/]

Diablo Valley Girls, PO Box 272885, Concord, 94527-2885 [www.best.com/~rwr13/.dvg/]

ETVC, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, 94142-6486 [www.transgender.org/tg/etvc/etvc1.html]

FTM International, 5337 College Ave., #142, Oakland, 94618, or contact James Green. [jomisong@aol.com] [www.ftm-intl.org]

Neutrol Corner, PO Box 12581, San Diego, 92112 [nutrlcnr@aol.com]

Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, 92686 [ppoc@aol.com]

Rainbow Gender Alliance, PO Box 700730, San Jose, 95170-0730 [www.transgender.org/tg/rga/rgapage.html]

Sacramento Gender Assoc., PO Box 215456, Sacramento, 95821-1456 [ovo4sgo@aol.com]

Sigma Sigma Beta#, PO Box 19933, So. Lake Tahoe, 96151
3rd Sect (FiM), write c/o Socio. Gender Assoc., PO Box 215456, Sacramento, 95821-1456, or contact Jonathan [stymie@netcom.com]

Colorado

Delta#, PO Box 16208, Denver, 80216

Gender Identity Center, Inc., 1455 Ammons Street, Suite 100, Lakewood, CO 80215-4993, [kathyw@fortnet.org] [www.transgender.org/tg/gic/index.html]

Connecticut

COS, PO Box 163, Farmington, 06034, [karacder@aol.com]

connecticutView (!), PO Box 2281, Devon, 06460 [www.ren.org/ofil/civ.html]

Twenty (XX) Club Inc.(for TS only), PO Box 387, Hartford, 06141-0387 [www.pcn.net/~elspeth/xx.html]

Delaware

Renaissance, Delaware Chapter, PO Box 5656, Wilmington, 19808 [www.ren.org]

Florida

Eden Society, PO Box 1692, Pompano Beach, 33061-1692 [edents@aol.com]

Pathways, PO Box 51462, Ft. Myers, 33905-1462. Phone: 941-693-1136.

Phi Epsilon Mu#, PO Box 3261, Winter Park, 32790-3261. For partner concerns [ggsondro@aol.com]

Serenity, PO Box 307, Hollywood, 33022

Storburst, P O Box 17411, Clearwater, FL 34622-0411, Phone: 813-523-8760 [users.aol.com/oshleyor/html/storbrst.html]

Tau Lambda#, PO Box 3426, Tallahassee, 32315-3426

Georgia

AGE(!), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, 30357

Sigma Epsilon#, PO Box 272, Rosewell, 30077-0272

Hawaii

Hawaii Transgender Outreach, PO Box 4530, Honolulu, 96812

Iowa

Iowa Artistry, PO Box 75, Cedar Rapids, 52406 [scottm@ins.infanet.net] [www.netins.net/shawcase/chriso/iowo.html]

Illinois

Central Illinois Gender Assoc., PO Box 126, Washington, 61517
Chi#, PO Box 40, Wood Dale, 60191-0040 [users.aol.com/chitriess/triss/chimoin.htm]

Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, 60657 Phone: 708-863-7714 [www.transgender.org/tg/cgs/cgsmain.html]

Indiana

IXE, PO Box 20710, Indianapolis, 46220

Kansas

KC Crossdressers & Friends, PO Box 4092, Overland Park, 66204

Wichita Transgender Alliance, PO Box 315, Kechi, 67067

Kentucky

Louisville Gender Society, Box 5458, Louisville, 40255 [dawnw@transgender.org] [www.ccs.uky.edu/~don/indextg.html]

Louisiana

Gulf Gender Alliance(!), PO Box 870213, New Orleans, 70187-1300

Maine

Outreach Institute, 405 Western Ave., #345, Sa. Portland, 04330

Transsupport, PO Box 17622, Portland, 04101

Massachusetts

ASSET (After Surgery Support Exchange for Transsexuals), PO Box 3121, Greenfield, 01302 [osset@crocker.com]

Sunshine Club, PO Box 149, Hadley, 01035-0149

TCNE Inc., PO Box 2283, Waburn, 01888-0483

Michigan

Crossroads, PO Box 1245, Royal Oak, 48068-1245

IME of Western Michigan, PO Box 1153, Grand Rapids, 49501

Minnesota

Beta Gamma#, PO Box 8591, Minneapolis, 55408

CLCC, PO Box 16265, Minneapolis, 55416

MFGE, PO Box 17945, St. Paul, 55117

Mississippi

Beto Chi#, PO Box 31253, Jackson, 39286-1253

Missouri

St. Louis Gender Foundation, PO Box 9433, St. Louis, 63117, Phone: 314-367-4128 [StLGF@aol.com] [www.transgender.org/tg/stlgf/index.html]

Nebraska

River City Gender Alliance, PO Box 680, Council Bluffs, 51502 [sgibbons@synergy.net]

Nevada

Theta Upsilon Gamma#, PO Box 91871, Henderson, 89009-1871

New Jersey

Chi Delta Mu#, PO Box 1, River Edge, 07661-0001

Resources

Contact CDS by mail at PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, Pa 19406, or by email at list@cdspub.com

JUMPSTART, PO Box 622, Poromus, 07653
[chotchko@hoven.ios.com]

MOTG(!), PO Box B243, Red Bank, 07701
[Vikkimotg@aol.com]

Renaissance, South Jersey, PO Box 189, Moys Landing, 08330

Sigma Nu Rho#, PO Box 9255, Trenton, 08650

New Mexico

Phi (Fiestol)#, B200 Montgomery NE, #241, Albuquerque, 87109

New York

Bi-gender self-help group, Lower Manhattan. Contact Lynda Frank at 212-765-3561.

CD-Network, PO Box 92055, Rochester, 14692

Crossroads of Buffalo, 2316 Delaware Ave, #102, Buffalo, 14216

EON Inc., 523 W. Onondago St., Syracuse, 13204

Lambda Chi Lambda#, PO Box 1010, Cooperstown, 13326

L.I.F.E., PO Box 3015, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

[Sobrin.Stone@rex.com]

Metropolitan Gender Network(!), 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, 10014

New York GIRL & Partner(!), PO Box 456, Centereach, 11720

Nu Phi Chi#, 7954 Transit Rd. S197, Williamsville, 14221

TGIC, PO Box 13604, Albany, 12212-3604

Transgender Network, PO Box 1611, South Rd Annex,
Poughkeepsie, 12601-0611

North Carolina

AGO (Alternative Gender-Oriented), 1235-E East Blvd., Charlotte
NC 28203

Circle of Children, Rt 5 Box 564, Zebulon, 27597

Koppo Beta#, PO Box 12101, Charlotte, 28220

Phoenix Transgender Support, PO Box 18332, Asheville, 28814

Triad Gender Assoc., PO Box 78082, Greensboro, 27427-8082

Ohio

Alpha Omega#, PO Box 2053, Sheffield Lake, 44054-0053

Cross-Port, PO Box 45204, Cincinnati, 45201-1692

Crystal Club, PO Box 287, Columbus, 43068

Gloss City Sisters, PO Box B532, Toledo, 43623

Paradise Club, PO Box 29564, Pismo, 44129

[paradisec@aol.com]

Oklahoma

Sigma Beta#, Box 60354, Oklahoma City, 73146

Sooner Diversity(!), PO Box 575, Norman, 73070

Oregon

North West Gender Alliance, PO Box 4928, Portland, 97208

Trans-Port, PO Box 66913, Portland, 97290

Pennsylvania

Erie Sisters, 2115 West 8th St., #261, Erie, 16505

NE Po. Transgender Alliance (Lehigh Valley), Call 610-821-2955.

Renaissance, Greater Philo. Chapter, PO Box 530, Bensalem,
19020 [bensalem@cpcn.com]

Renaissance, Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter, PO Box 2122,
Harrisburg, 17105

Transpitt, PO Box 3214, Pittsburgh, 15230

TS Spt Group, 6020 Penn Circle South, Pittsburgh, 15206, or call
412-661-7030 [tsg@usoor.net] [www.usoor.net/users/tsg/]

UJIMA - Peer counseling and info materials for teenagers. Meets
Wed. nights at 6:30 pm at 1207 Chestnut Street, 4th fl.,
Philadelphia.

Tennessee

Alpha Pi Omega#, PO Box 784, Brentwood, 37204-0784

Tennessee Vols, PO Box 92335, Nashville, 37209

[www.transgender.org/tg/tvols/]

Memphis TG Alliance, PO Box 11232, Memphis, 38111-0232

Texas

Alpha Chi#, PO Box 50266, Amarillo, 79159

Austin Second Image, PO Box 14965, Austin, 78761

Delta Omega#, PO Box 141924, Irving, 75014

Epsilon Tau#, PO Box 945, New Waverly, 77358

GTC, PO Box 90335, Houston, 77090

HCDA (Helping CDs Anon.), 6804 E Hwy 6 S #334, 77083

[www.firstnethau.com/brenda/hcda.htm]

ICTLEP (TG Law Conference), PO Drawer 35477, Houston, 77235-
5477 [ictlep@aol.com]

ReCost, PO Box 224001, Dallas, 75222-4001

Texas Assoc. of Transsexuals (TATs), PO Box 142, Belvoir, 77401

Tau Chi#, PO Box 1105, Alief, 77411 [trisinfo@aol.com]

Utah

Alpha Rho#, PO Box 1586, Orem, 84059-1586

Virginia

Trans-Gender Educ. Assoc., PO Box 16036, Arlington, 22215

Virginio's Secret, PO Box 34631, Richmond, 23234

Washington

Emerald City, PO Box 31318, Seattle, 98103

Ingersoll Gender Center, 1812 E. Madison, Suite 106, Seattle,
98122-2843 [ngersol@holcyon.com] [www.holcyon.com/
ingersol/iihome.html]

West Virginia

The Valley Girls, PO Box 181, Dunbar, 25064-

[brwtvg1@aol.com]

Trans-West Virginia, PO Box 2322, Huntington, 25724

Wisconsin

Gemini Gender Group, PO Box 44211, Milwaukee, 53214

Canada

Alberta

Phi Sigma#, PO Box B1115, 755 Lake Bonovisto Dr SE, Calgary,
T2J 7C9

Illusions Social Club, PO Box 2000, Calgary, T2C 1B4

Illusions Social Club II, PO Box 33002, Edmonton, T5P 4V8

British Columbia

Dream Girls, P.O. Box 535, Komloops, V2C 5L7

Cornbury Society, PO Box 3745, Vancouver, V6B 3Z1

Ontario

Xpressions, P.O. Box 223, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1B2, Voice
mail: (416) 812-6879

Gender Mosaic, PO Box 7421, Ottawa, K1L 8E4

Quebec

Club MET, 4113 Dorion St., Montreal, H2K 3B8

TransPORRS (Post Op Recovery Residence), 2006 Sherbrooke
East, Montreal, H2K 1B9

Due to the ever increasing number of listings worldwide, *LadyLike* regrets that this list of resources must be limited to North America. However, a worldwide list of groups is maintained on our website at [www.cdspub.com/ForGrp.html] and the most up to date list of N. American resources is at [www.cdspub.com/USGrp.html].

For the most complete paper listing of Support, Counseling and Vendor Resources in the transgender community, you need to get the 1996 *Who's Who & Resource Guide*.

Are you a vendor with products for the transgender community? Consider an ad on the Internet or an electronic store. Contact JoAnn Roberts at 610-640-9449, email: <vndrinfo@cdspub.com> for details on how to get wired.



(L. to R.) June, Celina, Chrissie at LIFE 10th Anniversary party



Larissa, W. Penna.



Nora, Washington, D.C.



Nicole, Calif.



Meredith, SE Penna.



Linda Lewis, Mich.

Michelle, W. Penna. ►



◄ Alicia, Mass.

Lois Fisher, Wash. ►



Out of the Closet... Into the Marketplace

Tammi Knight

I recently took a big step forward and gained confidence in my ability to shop for women's clothes. Because I could not have anticipated the many good experiences I have had, I wanted to share my story and give encouragement to those of us frozen with fear.

Not long ago, if I wanted any article of women's clothing, catalogues were my limit. I enjoyed this safe form of shopping, but I was nervous when it came to ordering. Giving the details of my order to a complete stranger was a challenge. I often asked my understanding wife to make the call for me. Because comparison shopping is impossible by catalogue, many purchases did not work out. Outfits that looked great in print often did not measure up.

With greater frequency my wife and I would shop together. As we would walk through the racks, I would act disinterested and indifferent to her comments about items. Inside I was dying of embarrassment. Misunderstandings were common. The nicer the store, the more my wife thought of her needs.

Often she would hold up a dress and say, "How do you like this?"

"Very nice," I'd say unenthusiastic.

"Oh" as she put the dress away.

"Wait, I liked it," I whispered.

"No, I don't think the color would work for me," She'd say.

"I liked it for me," in my lowest voice. Trying to make my point when I was already sure everyone in the store was watching me was never easy. My discomfort did not ease when my size four wife and I would bring our size 12 purchase to the register. I would pretend to be distracted or wander in circles until the deed was done. Does any of this sound familiar?

Shopping like this was not enjoyable. Most CDs probably dream of shopping in total freedom like any women would and I am no different. So I decided to try the direct approach, starting with the phone. I nervously called a local store.

"Is the store manager in?"

"This is the manager. May I help you?"

"Would your company policy allow a man to shop at your store?"

"Sure! no problem."

"Well, I mean for myself."

"Yes, sure, I understand. We have done it before."

"Really? Then I'll stop in when I can." I said in disbelief.

I was sure this response was a fluke. Maybe she thought I was just a prank caller. So I called another store of the same name and got the same polite reply. Thus I began to canvas other stores, large and small, to gauge their reaction. As the weeks passed, and my confidence grew, the sincerity of my request was more obvious. Occasionally I did receive a "No thanks," yet four out of five were helpful, gave me their names, and invited me in.

Seemingly the biggest step was developing the courage to actually walk in, ask for so and so, explain what I wanted and ask if I could I look around. Well the biggest step was also the easiest! Once I did it, I was amazed how easy the sales person made it for me. Any fear and apprehension was on my part. I had asked when the best time to come in would be so as not to be a bother to any other customers. I did not go in dressed. I did exactly as I was directed when it came to using the dressing room. I did nothing to embarrass another shopper, the sales staff or myself. I received great service! This was a method for building a relationship with a merchant. Using this common sense approach, I found I was easily accepted and my confidence soared. I gained a lot of experience in a short time and am no longer intimidated as before.

For what it's worth, the following are my tips for getting started yourself.

• Don't walk into a store cold. Call ahead to see if you are welcome. Get a name of the person willing to help you and make an appointment. If you will do this preparation, then you need

only to overcome your own nervousness. Start with stores with less traffic in quiet locations.

• I try to be a model customer I put clothes away exactly as I found them. I never step out of a dressing room to find a better mirror unless I can do it in privacy and the sales person allows it.

• I have developed many trusting relationships with sales people because they know that I am not there to inconvenience anyone or waste their time. In other words — I buy things. I have fun and the merchants have good reason to welcome me back. They are there to make sales, not to indulge me. Do not try on 12 outfits only to walk out with a pair of pantyhose.

• I do not shop dressed. If I passed easily and without question, I might. Since I do not, why introduce that factor into the equation?

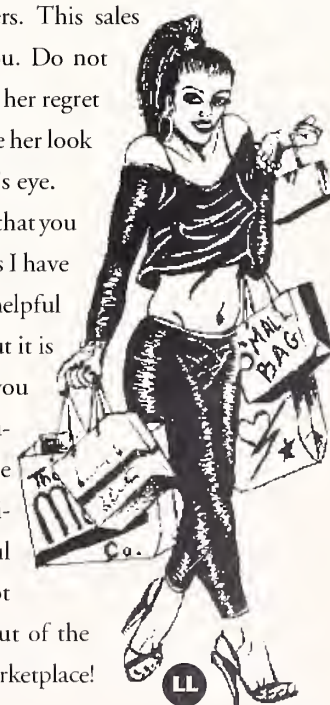
• Some stores may invite you to come in just before they open. This is great for everyone, and I appreciate when that option is available.

• I shop where I know the clothes will fit and the style is appropriate, then develop a relationship there.

• Relax, smile and be pleasant. If you do not look nice or act ill at ease, you are likely to make others feel the same way.

• Think of others. This sales person is helping you. Do not do anything to make her regret it or that would make her look bad in her employer's eye.

I cannot promise that you will be as fortunate as I have been in creating a helpful network of stores. But it is very probable that you can with small boutiques as well as large national chains. Capitalism is a wonderful thing, and it is not prejudicial. So get out of the closet and into the marketplace!



Night of A Thousand Gowns

PHOTOS EXCLUSIVELY FOR LADYLIKE MAGAZINE BY DANA B.







TV Video reviews

Crossdressing at the movies with Laurie Ann

In the past few years there have been a number of films with transgender themes or actors playing a transgendered person. The Crying Game; Priscilla, Queen of the Desert; To Wong Foo..., and M. Butterfly are recent releases that have achieved some degree of acclaim.

Although there are many more transgender oriented films today, there have been a number of such films since the 1960s. Most were the efforts of independent film makers. Most were low budget and often had obvious technical and acting flaws. Almost all of them had minor and very brief theatrical exposure and quickly faded from sight.

Many of these half-forgotten films have recently been transferred to video tape and are available from video sources that specialize in cult and obscure cinema. This column will review some of the lesser known films. You may find, as I have, that most of these films are not only fun and entertaining to watch, but they also offer some interesting insights about one of our favorite subjects — crossdressing.

Mascara

Every drag bar has a large number of male customers who enjoy associating with the performers and cross-dressed patrons. A large percentage of these men are heterosexual. Many are crossdressers, but for a variety of reasons, either do not crossdress or only crossdress in secret. These men experience crossdressing vicariously by associating with the “girls” who can appear realistic, pass and be glamorous. For some of these men the idea of expressing their femininity is so threatening they cannot even admit it to themselves. **Mascara**, the 1967 French-Belgian-Dutch collaboration is about a man like this, one who is unable to acknowledge his inner longings for femininity. The consequences of this inability are murder, madness, and destruction of the happiness of the one person he loves—his sister.

Mascara stars Canadian actor Michael Sarrazin as Bert Sanders, Superintendent of Police in a large European city. Bert is handsome, sophisticated, and successful. He is also bored, empty, cynical, manipulative, and arrogant. Like that other lawman, J. Edgar Hoover, he is sexually repressed. But Bert can come alive and show a human side when he's with his sister, Gaby, played by English actress Charlotte Rampling. Bert and Gaby are very close, and their relationship has obvious incestuous overtones—with



Eva Robbins as Pepper

a slight twist. There are subtle hints that Bert identifies with his sister and is attracted to feminine attire.

Bert and Gaby are opera lovers and Bert is fascinated with a very unique nightclub called Miste Butterfly. It's a drag bar, but the “girls” who perform there present a far from typical drag show. They present themselves as appropriately costumed opera divas and lip-sync to well known arias. The club provides for the wide variety of its customer's sexual tastes—it's a sort of pagan sexual smorgasbord—



Romy Haag as Lana

but the main attraction is the divas. Bert and his well placed social and government buddies use it as a hang out.

The film begins as Bert and Gaby attend an opening night performance at the city's opera house. Bert is enthralled, but it's not the opera's diva that holds his attention. Her lovely gown is the object of his fascination. Later he remarks, "I can't get that dress out of my mind." They go backstage and he sees the dress draped on a divan. He sits next to it and touches it with reverence. The sensuality displayed is reminiscent of a similar scene in *Glen or Glenda?*, when Glen touches and rubs a nylon gown with reverence as a shocked and disapproving clerk looks on.

The siblings are introduced to Chris (Derek DeLint), the opera's costume designer. There is an immediate attraction between Chris and Gaby. They become romantically involved and this fuels Bert's jealousy and murderous rage, but it also gives him a chance to manipulate Chris into lending him the dress. Chris assumes the dress is for Gaby to wear at a party and he insists on being the dresser. He is surprised to find it's really for Pepper, one of the stars at *Miste Butterfly* but he still goes along with Bert's wishes. Pepper is gorgeous in the special dress and her performance is met with loud acclaim.

Bert is ecstatic as he and Pepper return to the her dressing room. While she removes the dress he tells her how beautiful she is and how happy she has made him feel. It seems she has reminded him of his happiest memory—the day of his sister's confirmation. He says, "She wore a white dress that day... and her first pair of high heels."

During this speech Pepper disrobes and slowly turns toward Bert till we see her totally nude. The scene is similar to the nude exposé in *The Crying Game*, and while it probably took audiences by surprise in 1967, *LadyLike*

readers will have figured out Pepper's secret long before.

Pepper thinks Bert has declared his love for her and responds with a loving gesture. He reacts in a violently negative way. As she tries to understand his anger, in a moment of insight she asks, "What's stopping you from living out your dreams...What's stopping you from being yourself?" As she exclaims her pity for him, Bert kills her.

This scene is repeated later with another beautiful performer, Lana (Romy Haag), but this time it is the result of Bert's premeditation. He hopes to pin the killings on Chris, thus "solving" the murders, and also removing Gaby's suitor.

Bert convinces everyone he will have to lure the killer out of hiding by wearing the dress and performing the aria. Of course, complications arise which result in the death of Chris and Bert. The film ends with Gaby identifying her brother's body.

Mascara is a well crafted tragedy and the acting is superb. Unfortunately, the film did not receive much attention. Critics panned it, probably due to the portrayal of what was considered an unconventional lifestyle. The film illustrates what disastrous results may occur if one fails to come to terms with one's inner longings and desires.

It's also unfortunate that we don't get to see more of the *Miste Butterfly* and it's performers. Pepper was played by Eva Robbins and Lana was portrayed by Romy Haag. Romy sang in her own voice and both of these performers are interesting and talented.

The portrayal of opera divas by drag performers could raise the art of female impersonation to new levels of sophistication. I hope some of our talented readers will take note. Remember, opera began with the drag artistes of a bygone era taking on the female roles.

My thanks to Nancy Ann Howes for telling me about this film. Readers should be able to find *Mascara* at most video rental stores.

Next review: The moody, surrealistic film *The Tenant* by the controversial, but talented, Roman Polanski. It's another story about a man learning of his desire to dress and his inability to accept that desire.

Ed. Note: *Mascara* is available from TLA Video, 800-333-8521 for \$19.99.

Baby let Me Take You On A Sea Cruise...

Dignity & Fun On The High Seas

by Carol and Babs Casbar

The rays of the bright Friday morning sun bathed our hotel room overlooking Biscayne Bay and they, with the help of a wake-up call, brought us from the memory of the prior evening's adventure in South Beach to anticipation of the reality of our cruise on Norwegian Cruise Lines' newest ship, *The Leeward*. We've sailed on cruises many times over the last 20 years, traveling with everyone from ex-Presidents, to diplomats, to famous performers, but never with the same degree of anticipation and anxiety because Babs was going as her femme self for the entire journey!

We flew down the previous morning from the cold North of December with our friends Jodie and Char from New York and met up with Dyan and Sheila, who were coming in from Philly, and Delia and Burta from North Carolina. The eight of us, plus Elaine and Gloria from New Jersey, were joining Peggy and Melanie Rudd on their **Dignity Cruise 6**, a total of 26 gender-gifted people, spouses and families.

After a light breakfast, we packed and checked out. We had to wait for a station wagon taxi to carry all our luggage — after all this was a three night cruise and Jody's three-changes-an-evening standard inspired Babs to pack a little extra clothing!

At the pier we met Peggy and Mel and several of the group and boarded. First things first, Babs made an appointment for a manicure at the beauty salon, then meet everyone for lunch. It's always time to eat on a cruise... and we hadn't even left the harbor! Next is the mandatory safety drill, "What, I have to squeeze that tacky orange life vest that doesn't even match my nails



Babs & Jodie do the drill

over my head... It'll mess up my coiffure! Watch the wig!

Priorities

Time for the beauty salon, another first for Babs who actually arrived on time (another first). Nancy, a young English gal, and another manicurist gets a little wide-eyed at my somewhat manly sized hands but they don't say anything! Jodie makes her entrance and says the "group" is meeting for cocktails at one of the lounges. Next comes Carol who sees I didn't followed her nail color suggestion. I decide to explain that Carol is my wife of 28 years. Nancy seems to be fascinated... Questions and more questions. "You have children,... You're not gay... How often do you do this?" This seems a very positive start! Waving my hands to dry my nails, I'm off to the lounge for cocktails and dancing.

If people hadn't noticed us before, they certainly did when we got up to dance! We attracted some friendly people who were curious and appeared supportive... Hey, we're middle class family people just like you, only with a little extra. The younger and the older people seemed to be the friendliest, more so than those in our own age group. Maybe they were threat-

ened or read us more easily? When the young talented musicians performing there did a little song spoof, *Me and My New Wonderbra*, Babs yelled out, "My goodness, how did you know!"

Dinner Time

Peggy suggested the late seating for dinner. We entered the Seven Seas dining room full of pride but were disappointed to find our group was seated in the farthest corner of the room. We felt we were in the "back of the bus," segregated in our own little nook. There were four other tables in our area, each seating a twosome. Evidently there was an attitude problem with one couplet of women which so upset one of our girls that she did not dress the entire day, and attended the formal Saturday evening in DRAB — Dressed As Boy. With a little support, her confidence was restored and she reappeared on Sunday night.



Babs at Dinner

Showtime!

The chief resident entertainer, a talented gal of Cuban descent, galvanized the audience by having us all participate in an Anglicized version of a popular Spanish song that sounded like, "One ton tomato! I ate a one ton tomato!" At shows end, one could hear most of the audience singing or

humming, "One ton tomato..."

The main ballroom was adjacent to the gambling casino, so one had to go through the casino to visit the ballroom. They get you coming and going! We visited the Casino, where Babs in all her excitement played Blackjack like a "blonde," (and payed for it) while Carol tried the slots. We caught up with the group at the disco lounge where we danced and tried to talk until the wee hours, missing the Midnight buffet. I think we closed the disco!

Saturday Morning

We docked in Key West. We slept late, took breakfast in our cabin, then it was up to the pool deck where we found Jodie flaunting her bathing suit, and Dyan's alter ego in the whirlpool. After a Strawberry Daiquiri (or was it a Bahama Mama) we prepared to dress for shore duty — shopping and walking on Duvall St. — but wait, it was time for lunch already. The six of us sat at an empty table for eight and before long we were joined by an older British couple. They sat next to Shiela and a DRAB Dyan. The gent was a retired British naval officer. They were very pleasant and a welcome addition. Since we were on a shopping mission, we left Shiela and Dyan with the British couple and headed for the gangplank.



Babs on the pool deck

Dyan later told us the couple had no clue about Jodie and thought Babs was Beatrice Arthur, the actress from

the *Golden Girls*! He even considered asking for an autograph!

Key West is an eclectic resort with a significant gay population and we had no thoughts about *not* dressing for the day. Maybe it was the economy or the influx of cruise ships, but we noticed more overpriced T-shirt shops and fewer art galleries and boutiques than on our last visit.

We stopped at C.C. Ryders, a local bar, for a cool drink, some relief from the hot sun, and complimentary neck beads. The bartender remembered Jodie from FanFair last Halloween. We wonder why she seems to make such a lasting impression? The bartender took a picture for us and then it was back to the ship. We passed some French sailors, but they totally ignored us. Those French! No taste.



The Captain seems so pleased!

Saturday Night

Captain's Cocktail party, formal dress, pictures with the Captain and a special dinner, plus we still wanted another chance at the casino. (Foolish girl!) After switching and sharing some jewelry, we were ready for the Big night! (Somebody said, "Marry a transvestite. You'll double your wardrobe.")

We queued up to be received by the Captain. He shook hands and then we posed with him for a picture. I was a little upset that he didn't kiss my hand.

We partook of the hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine, spoke with others

on the cruise and one very nice woman paid *the girls* the ultimate compliment, "I hate you, I'm jealous, you look better than I do!" She then asked if her husband could take a picture of her with us. Who could refuse such a request, *the girls* pose position seemed to be automatic! Dinner was highlighted by a surprise birthday celebration for Delia (no, we won't tell).

We were decked out in our finest and Peggy had arranged for a group portrait, all twenty six of us, a permanent reminder of the wonderful people on our trip together. Since the photographer was doing individual portraits, Babs just **had** to show off the results of her new wonderbra... Cleavage!

After that, it was back to the lounge for more dancing, then another attempt at the casino where Babs made a come back only to fall a little farther behind. We ended up at the disco. (Did Jodie change again?) Melanie was going strong, twisting and rocking! Was that Dyan dancing on the table? The hours slipped away. Laughter, singing, dancing — we had a ball!

Sunday Morning

The ship anchored just off the Norwegian Cruise Line's private island in the Bahamas, Great Stirrup Cay. The weather was exquisite; clear, with just an occasional wisp of cotton in the blue sky, air temperature 84°, water 79°, low humidity and a light breeze!

"Babs, there's no excuse not to wear that bathing suit! So you've gained a couple of pounds. It's a little frumpy looking? Your makeup has sunscreen, it's water proof, it won't wash off so easily. You don't *have* to go swimming!" Carpe Diem! It was time to go, "Let's do it." Dark sunglasses will keep Babs incognito. Ha, Ha, Ha!

To The Beach

We were away on the launch. It was

continued on page 36

Dignity & Fun

only a couple of minutes to the crowded beach where Burta greeted us and we followed her to a spot near large rocks. We parked, stretched out and applied sunscreen to just relax in the sun. The clear cool water beckoned, more refreshing than that frozen Pina Colada. Heavenly! There were large round floats to rent, two or three people could fit on them. It looked like fun. I was tempted to rent the snorkeling gear, but what would happen to my wig if the mask had to be suddenly flipped off? We settled for a big, circular air mattress raft. OK girls, it's float time! Char, and Jodie were on one and Carol and I were on another.



Jodie & the float

The breeze picked up and with the tide we were being pulled back toward the beach. It's difficult to maneuver a thick, pizza shaped raft. Babs jumps off and starts pushing it to deeper water. She tries to jump up, but no go, one last attempt! The boobs get in the way... Uh oh! We were tipping over! Flip... Splash! We got baptized, new wig and all! I had to play mermaid! Thankfully Covermark is waterproof. Did I frighten a Barracuda!? So much for what seemed to be a good idea! Is that Elaine snorkeling with Gloria?

Lunch on The Sand

Hot dogs, hamburgers and barbecue chicken. Ladies do not just grab a

piece of chicken dripping in sauce and take a large bite... Very messy and hell on the makeup! Dyan and Sheila finally came on shore. We were going to suggest they use our float, but thought better of it! After lunch, it was adventure time as Babs climbed to the top of the rocks to get a better view of the island and feel the stirring sea breeze. A young newlywed couple asks Babs to take their picture, a nice thought. Now to climb down. That was more difficult than getting up. Shoes are definitely needed on those sharp rocks.

Soon the breeze has picked up a little more and dark clouds start to appear in the sky. After one last dip, it's time to pack up and head for the launch to ferry us back to the ship. As we head back, crammed next to one another, we spontaneously started singing, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," followed by a chorus of "One Ton Tomato." Everyone enjoyed that day!

Last night On Board

Back on board we changed and started to pack. This was our last night. We stopped by the much ballyhooed art auction, but didn't stay long as we didn't see the works of the artists they advertised, and felt the presentation of some of their pieces was a little misleading. Before we realize it, it's time to change for dinner. We had reserved tables for everyone at the Bistro, but some would have to wait. So half of us went back to the regular dining room... too hungry to wait.

Ten o'clock came and it was time for the Fifties and Sixties sock hop in the Stardust lounge. This time we changed to shorts and sneakers. Melanie came down and we were ready to rock and roll! We started a Conga line and everyone joined in. Remember the Hokie Pokie? The staff had a Hula Hoop contest planned and they were looking for male volunteers.



Jodie hulas that hoop

There goes Jodie! "That's a guy?" (She really needs to be a little more outgoing.) We danced and a couple of staffers broke in. Babs got the hunky young man and Carol got the girl.

After the Stardust Lounge we made a last visit to the disco. Then it was time for packing and tagging luggage. We were tired and had to get up early since the ship docked at 7:00 AM and breakfast was at 7:45.

Voyage's End

Monday morning Babs' alter ego was there with a more macho look, and that baseball cap. Uh oh! I packed the polish remover and guess what Babs forgot to do? Panic time! Dyan comes to the rescue.

We go to the dining room for breakfast and greet people we'd met throughout the trip. "Good morning, don't you remember me?" There's confusion, most of them do double takes and then smile as they realized it's Jodie and Babs. Our poor waiter is really confused. How to address these "new" men? "Now you can call me, sir!"

Peggy and Mel, thank you, we had a great time!

[Photos courtesy of Babs & Jodie]

The Rudds have planned a 7 day cruise from New York over Labor Day 1996. For information contact the travel agent at 1-800-247-7021. Ask for Brenda and the Dignity Cruise.

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Chapter 16

Our girl, Chantice, was in a phone booth, talking animatedly. She banged down the receiver and left the booth and leaned against a building with her hands in her pockets, watching traffic. She ignored a man in a Buick who tried to entice her into his car.

In an impossibly short time, a black Cadillac with darkened windows pulled up beside her. She walked over and bent down beside the driver's window and said something in a voice I was too far away to hear. I saw her shrug and reach into her halter top and remove a wad of bills, which she thrust through the window.

I'd been strolling down the sidewalk, acting as if I was maybe on the way home from school. As I got about fifty feet away, Chantice straightened up abruptly and headed back towards her corner. The opaque window of the Caddy went up, and it started to roll away. I walked casually past Chantice, hoping she wouldn't notice me, and then broke into a trot, following the big black car around the corner. It was a short block; I caught it at the light. Bobbo Joe was nowhere around with my car, and I knew I was about to lose the Caddy. I ran as hard as I could, catching it just as the light changed, and got both hands on the television antenna on the trunk. My feet were on the bumper and I scrunched down, simultaneously hoping that the antenna was securely mounted, that the driver of the car didn't notice me getting on and wouldn't see me in the rear-view mirror, and that I wouldn't be seen by a cop.

None of those things happened. At first, the Caddy weaved leisurely through the city streets.

Pedestrians stared, and or

one two of them shouted, but the windows were up and the driver didn't hear. After a while he got in a hurry. It was a rough ride, and I was nearly thrown off a couple of times. I had a bad moment when I thought the Caddy was

about to pull onto the interstate, but the driver made his way up on a side road and pulled into an abandoned lot.

The car bounced and lurched across the field, and I knew that if the antenna went, it would happen then, but it held.

We were in

a pretty bad section of town, and I found myself hoping that we weren't going somewhere the driver had friends. We didn't; he bounced the car across the lot, stopping in front of a half-demolished brick building. The roof was gone, and some of the walls, and I saw a dark blue truck in the shadows. Only one pickup on earth had that greasy round smear on the back window. It was Mary June's, all right.

The Caddy stopped, and I dropped to the ground and ducked down on the passenger side. There were lots of loose bricks, and I armed myself with one and waited. I felt a bit like the hero of the western I'd been reading, sneaking into an Indian camp to rescue his friend.

The driver's door opened, and a man in a big floppy hat got out. He was a small man, Puerto Rican, perhaps. He was dressed in a floppy gray suit, and I could see the glimmer of a Rolex on his wrist. His shoes were black-and-tan Italian monstrosities with little leather fringes on the toe.

I crawled up to the front of the car as he walked to the trunk and opened it. I moved back around to the passenger side as he headed toward the pickup truck, carrying a five-gallon can of gasoline. I followed, hiding in the shadows alongside a wall.

He stopped at Mary June's truck and splashed gasoline all over it. He was digging in his pockets, presumably for a lighter, when I went up alongside his head with my brick. He didn't fall right away, just stood there swaying, with his eyes rolling back in his head, so I moved the brick from my right hand to my left and whopped him on the other side. He went down like a redwood. I searched him, and found a pack of Marlboros, a

The Problem
by Dallas Denny

disposable lighter, a lockback knife, the wad of money that Chantice apparently had given him, and a bigger wad of money in another pocket. He wasn't carrying any ID.

I wasted about five minutes trying to slit his shirt into strips for binding him, then I got an idea and cut the wiring harness out of the Caddy. The wires were plastic-coated, white and black and yellow and orange and red and green and blue and brown and tan, and they made it easy to secure him. I tied him as tight as I could.

His shoes really offended me. I took them off his feet and built a little altar of bricks and put them on it. Then I poured gasoline over them and set them afire. The fire was out and the shoes were smoking uglily when he started to revive. He moaned and started to sit up and suddenly grew quiet and still.

I walked around to where he could see me.

"Bitch," he said. "I'll kill you."

"You have a problem," I lamented.

"No! You have a problem."

"You're the one who's tied up, 'ol Hoss," I said companionably. "I have the gasoline. I have a match. You have a problem." I looked over toward the smoldering shoes and his eyes followed. He realized what I'd done, and paled.

"I had a big debate," I said, "trying to decide whether to take them off your feet first."

He didn't say much, and I knew I'd scared him.

All the Zane Grey and Louis L'Amour I'd ever read was coming back to me, and I was tempted to hitch up my gunbelt and spit. But I had no gunbelt, and it isn't ladylike to spit. "The way I see it, partner, we can do this nasty or nice. Let's try nice. Where is the girl?"

"Screw you."

"Where's the fat boy?"

"You're horsemeat, cunt, when I get out of here."

"So much for nice," I sighed, unscrewed the cap of the gasoline can and doused his feet and ankles. "Seems to me," I told him, "a cowpoke needs a good fire at night."

"You crazy," he yelled. "You horseshit crazy."

"I may be crazy," I agreed, "but I ain't too stupid to strike a match. Now, where's the girl, you cayuse?"

He pleaded. "I can't tell you. R.J. would kill me."

"Way I see it," I said between my teeth, "a bird in the hand is worse than two in the bush. R.J. might kill you, but I'm most certainly gonna burn your feet off right this minute." I splashed more gasoline on him and made a flame with the lighter.

"Ahhhh! Get that away from me! Get it away from me!"

"You know the drill," I said.

"All right! All right!"

I let the lighter go out. "Where?"

"5417 Jefferson Street," he yelled, "in Scottsdale."

I looked at him and made a flame. "I don't think so."

"It is! It is! I swear it! It's a crack house. Big white house with shutters. They got the girl there."

"Is she all right?"

"Woman, I ain't no judge of that. All I know is they got her there."

"And what else?"

"It's a crack house. A crack house! They armed like the Middle East. Get that fire outta my face, fool!"

"The fat boy," I said.

"They got the fat boy runnin' numbers. Hey, you just get that fire away from me."

"The truck?"

"Man, they told me I could have the truck. I was gonna burn it 'cause one of my girls told me some folks was lookin' for it. I'm gonna kill that whore for settin' me up like this. You watch out if I see your ass again, too, sister."

"You're going to have a hard time catching me on stumps," I told him, and bent down. The flame was jetting from the lighter, and I was half-afraid I would catch him on fire. "5413?" I asked.

"5417! 5417! Get that fire outta here!"

I straightened up and put out the flame. "If I ever see you again," I said, "it won't be your feet I go for."

"You gonna let me go now?"

"Don't press your luck," I said. "You ought to be happy I didn't turn you into a Krispy Kritter."

"Man, that's one crazy white bitch," I heard him say as I walked away.

Chapter 17

I considered taking M.J.'s truck, but the police were looking for it. I couldn't drive the Caddy, either, as I had taken out all the wires. I looked inside it and saw why Italian Shoes appeared so fast after Chantice called him. He had a car phone. There was also a briefcase with a combination lock. I forced the lock with his knife, breaking the blade in the process. Inside were two dozen glassine envelopes, each containing a fingernail-sized chunk of what I suspected to be crack cocaine. There was also a stack of plastic bags with what looked like construction paper in them. I opened one and took out the paper and unfolded it. It looked like it had come from a desk blotter. There were spots on the paper where something had been dropped: twenty regular rows of twenty. I thought I knew what I was holding. I put the paper back in the bag and stuck it in my pocket, then closed the briefcase and walked to the edge of the field and up the block until I could find a street sign, then went back to the Caddy. Our boy was struggling, but I had tied his bonds tight.

"Don't hurt yourself," I told him. "They're gonna know who you are by your car, anyway."

"You ain't been messin' with my ride, have you?"

"What do you think I tied you up with?"

He looked at his multicolor bonds. "Oh, man," he said in despair. "I'd rather have lost my feet."

continued on next page

The Problem

I called the police on his cellular phone, telling them I had caught a car thief and there were drugs in his car. Then I high-tailed it to the freeway. I'm a pretty girl; I had a ride before I was halfway up the ramp. A man in a business suit picked me up. He took me back to Peachtree, but I was fighting his hands the entire way and he was wearing a wedding ring, too.

I had a half-hour wait before Bobbo came around, and I learned a little bit about what it must be like to be a hooker. It ranged from outrageous ("Hey, sweet lips! I got something you can chew on!") to subtle (a man who must have been in his 80s slowed down and patted the seat beside him). I was thrilled to see Bobbo Joe's familiar bulk.

Bobbo and Tammy Mae had a million questions, and, of course, they were hungry. I told them they had to wait, and called the sheriff's office back home. Sheriff Foster started out by trying to get me to turn myself and Bobbo Joe in, but when I explained what had happened and how Tammy Mae had come to be with me, he relented and said that he would make sure I wouldn't get locked up if I would call the police and turn Tammy Mae over to them. I did.

A half-hour later, there was a knock on the door, and I opened it to a policeman in a uniform. He was in his early twenties, blond and boyish. Nice looking. "Good evening, Miss. I'm Officer Martin. How can I help you?"

I took a deep breath. If the sheriff was not playing straight with me, me and Tammy Mae and Bobbo Joe were all going downtown. But I had to risk it. "My name is Laura Ann Sykes. I know where Mary June Cunningham is."

"Who's Mary June Cunningham?" he asked blankly.

"She's the girl that was kidnapped," I told him. "I know where she is. And I have a missing person named Tammy Mae Sykes to turn over to you."

"No!" shrieked Tammy Mae, who proceeded to climb under the bed.

The officer looked around the motel room. "Okay, where are your parents?"

I glared at him. "They're not around."

"Young lady..."

"Check it out," I told him. "Mary June Cunningham. Tammy Mae Sykes." I gave him Sheriff Foster's phone number and closed the door in his face.

About three minutes later, there was another knock. "We have to talk," the cop said, and I knew the sheriff hadn't sold me out.

We sat in his car and I gave him as much of the story as I thought he should know— pretty much everything, except about my Problem, and of course I didn't tell him about my little escapade with the man in the black Cadillac. About halfway through the story he noticed that I was pretty and nearly of age, and he perked right up and began flirting. "I'd appreciate it if you would come to the station with me and tell all this to the ser-

geant, Miss Sykes."

"Call me Laura Ann," I sighed. Officer Martin was really nice-looking.

I remembered the big wad of money in my pocket and excused myself and went in the motel room and gave most of it to Bobbo Joe, with instructions to take the car and find himself something to eat. "Go someplace nice," I say. Then I remembered the plastic bag in my pocket and put it between the pages of the Gideon Bible.

"Tammy Mae," I said.

"I hate you," she cried from her hiding place.

"You know you have to go back."

"No!" She refused to come out from under the bed, and in the end we had to go get Officer Miller, who carried her, kicking, screaming and cursing, to his car. He put her in the back, and let me ride up front with him. At the station, Tammy Mae was hustled off and Officer Martin made me tell my story to the sergeant, who made me tell it to the captain, who took me to the judge, and I had to tell it a fourth time. As we went up the ladder, the men got older and plainer-looking, and I wondered if I was looking at what a lifetime of police work would do to Officer Martin.

The judge wanted to know how I knew where M. J. was.

"I heard it on the street," I said.

The judge and the captain began arguing vigorously, with the sergeant and officer Martin taking the captain's side. The captain wanted to raid the house in Scottdale, but I heard the judge say something about lacking probable cause, and I knew things are not going well.

"Excuse me," I said. "Would you happen to have picked up a gentleman who was all tied up with automotive wire?"

The captain looked at me suspiciously. "What do you know about that?"

"I'd rather not say," I told him, "but if you give me five minutes with him, I think I can give you probable cause."

The captain took me into an interrogation room; the judge came along because he was curious. Officer Miller and the sergeant were still with us.

After a while another policeman brought in Italian Shoes. He acted like a smug bastard until he saw me, and then his face went all to pieces. "Get that crazy bitch away from me!" he screamed. "Get her away!"

"I'm having trouble remembering that address," I said.

"5417! 5417!"

"And what street?" I asked.

"You know!"

"Say it."

"Jefferson. Jefferson! In Scottdale." He grabbed the sleeve of the policeman beside him. "Take me back to my nice safe cell. I don't want to be around that woman."

The captain— his name was Dobrowski— grinned and shoved a telephone at Italian Shoes. "You're allowed one phone

call. You can make it now."

"No! Just get me outta here! That girl ain't right."

Chapter 18

The sergeant wanted to ask me a lot of questions about Italian Shoes, but the captain hushed him up. The judge signed the warrant, and I was told to stick around the station.

"No way!" I said. "I want to go along. Mary June is bound to be scared, and she'll want to see someone she knows."

"It's against policy," the sergeant growled, but the captain, who had been contemplating me, told me I could come along if I would promise to stay in the patrol car. I said I would.

Scottdale's streets were full of all kinds of people who were just standing around: teenagers, adults, kids, old men and women, all looking as if they had nothing better to do, which they probably didn't. Many of them appeared to be drunk or stoned. There were three police cruisers, but all the cops were looking nervous. It was that kind of neighborhood.

5417 Jefferson was a dilapidated white frame house with bars on the windows. The grass in the yard was long gone, and the red clay was covered with pieces of broken glass and assorted trash. The cruisers pulled up on three sides of the house (two of them driving right through the yard) and the police took up their positions. I was in the car that was directly in front of the house. Officer Martin walked up to the front door and stood to the side and leaned over and knocked on it. There was no answer.

He knocked harder, and then leaned forward as if he were listening to someone talking inside the house. Suddenly the door burst open and a man with a gun ran out. He looked as if he was prepared to give someone a hard time, but when he saw Officer Miller and all those other cops with their service revolvers out, his eyes got big and he turned to run back in the house. Then he thought better of it and stopped and put his hands in the air.

Officer Miller pulled him aside and took the pistol, none-too-gently, and four policemen wearing bulletproof padding and carrying riot guns ran into the house.

In five minutes, three men were standing with their hands against the wall. But there was no Mary June, and there was no Johnny Ray, and there was no one called R.J.

Captain Dobrowski took me inside. "These are automatic weapons," he said. He pointed to an aluminum tray full of what looks like brown sugar. "That's crack. This is a crack house, and we're lucky we didn't have to get those guys out of here the hard way. But there's no sign that the girl was here. Wait a minute," he said, reading a piece of paper that an officer handed him. "One of the neighbors just said she's seen two white kids, a girl and an overweight boy. So they've been here. God knows where they are now, and the one you call R.J. — stands for Reginald James — runs what is damn near a white slavery ring, picking up young girls and boys, doping them up and putting

them on the street to turn tricks. All the hookers on Juniper Street feed kids to him. We've been after him for six months or more, but haven't been able to shut him down. He moves those kids all over town, and we're always one step behind him.

"The man you softened up may tell us something. The three we just picked up look like pretty hard cases; we'll get nothing useful out of them. They're already hollering for their lawyers. We'll do our best to sweat them, and we'll find the girl."

He gave me a hard look. "I appreciate the information you brought. I may not agree with the way in which you got it, but you did us a service. But listen, hotshot, we can do our job without your help. These are dangerous people. If you go messing around with them, you'll get hurt or you'll get dead. A young girl like you..."

I wonder what he would say if he knew about my Problem.

"...is especially vulnerable. You let Patrolman Miller take you back to your motel and sit tight. Or better yet, go back home. We'll find your friend faster if we're not having to look out for you, too."

"Yes, sir," I said.

Officer Miller didn't drive me straight back to the motel. He took me to an all-night diner and bought me a big salad, which I couldn't eat. I picked at it as he ate a bowl of pinto beans with cornbread, probing between bites into my encounter with Italian Shoes. Once I was sure that it was for his edification (and Captain Dobrowski's, who, I am sure, told Miller to find out what he could), and not to get me to admit to something for which he could arrest me, I told him about Chantice, and my wild ride on the back of the Caddy, and of the pyre with the burning shoes.

He thought it was great. "You did *that*? And you look like such a nice girl!"

I lowered my eyes and peered at him through my lashes. "I *am* a nice girl."

That reminded him of his personal interest in me, and he grabbed my hand. "Laura, I'd like to see you when this is all over."

"Officer Miller..."

"Adrian."

"Adrian. I live several hundred miles from here. I'm in high school. I don't think it can work. Besides, I'm... spoken for." I thought of Mary June, tied up somewhere, and stood up abruptly. "I'm sorry. I like you. But please take me home."

He let me off at the motel, but not before putting his arm around me and pulling me close to him and kissing me. Then he gave me a scrap of paper with his phone number on it. "If you're ever again in Atlanta," he said wistfully.

I watched the black-and-white pull away into the night. When he hit the road, he made a whoop with the siren, then turned on the blue lights and roared away.

to be continued...



JoAnn Roberts (l.) & Virginia Prince (r.)



Laura, Ohio



Chris



Andrea Susan, NY



Amy, Ore.



Beverly, Mich.



Joanne, Md.

MirrorTOTTiM



Kelly, Conn.

Mirror Mirror



Kristen, W. Penna.



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On My Mind...



I had a really wonderful experience this past April. I went to The Night Of A Thousand Gowns (see the pictorial on pages 24-25 & 30-31). For those of you who don't know of this event, it is sponsored by

the Imperial Court of New York City. The Imperial Court system has "courts" all across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Each court is a federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The courts hold special events and coronations each year to raise money for other organizations in the gay and lesbian community.

So, what was so wonderful about the New York event? They went out of their way to be transgender inclusive. The outgoing Empress IX Philomena made mention of the transgender community several times in her address. She recently made an educational video for the Gender Identity Center in New York regarding empowerment for the transgender community. I felt honored to be a part of the festivities because our part of the alternate lifestyles community had finally been recognized.

Members of our community continue to build bridges to prominent gay, lesbian and bisexual organizations. Last year I told you about how our tiny community made the entire gay community sit up and take notice of us when the Human Rights Foundation tried to keep us out of the 1995 Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Following up on that coup, transgender activists like Phyllis Frye (ICTLEP) have been attending other gay and lesbian conferences and they've been getting noticed, too. While I was sashaying in my beaded gown in NYC, Frye and others from ICTLEP were at the Out & Equal Employment Conference in Chicago (probably in business suits) sponsored by the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). NGLTF now officially includes transgender in all of its press releases and information materials. "The Task Force is now the second national organization where I can attend a convention and not continually have to fight for recognition..." Frye said in a recent Press Release. (The first was the National Les-

bian and Gay Law Association, NLGLA, sponsor of the biannual Lavender Law Conference.)

It's Not All A Bed Of Roses

It's ironic that just as we are achieving some measure of recognition outside our own community, there is a storm of protest brewing inside it over the use of the "transgender" as an umbrella term for ourselves. If you consider that our "community" is composed of transvestites (call a spade a spade, I say), transgenderists, and transsexuals, you can see how it's difficult to use a single word to encompass us all. For better or worse, transgender seems to have stuck both inside and outside our community. Personally I like the term much better than any of the alternatives that have been offered and it seems to fit the circumstances. Transvestites, when they crossdress, cross (trans) a gender line. No, they don't stay there permanently, but I don't see that "trans-anything" has to be permanent. Transgenderists cross that gender line on a, more or less, permanent basis. Transsexuals have to "trans" that gender line before they "trans" anything else, so they fit under the umbrella as well. Yet, it's the transsexual segment of our community that is making all the noise.

Well, to be factual, it is a small, yet vocal, minority of transsexuals who dislike (in some cases, hate) the "transgender agenda" as it's been called. Most of what I've read and heard is vehement rhetoric with little or no sense behind it. Rights for all transgender people are going to cause all transsexuals to have problems. As if. But the best, most reasoned argument I've read came from Davinna Anne Gabriel who used to publish *TransSister: The Journal of Transsexual Feminism*. Gabriel feared that the transsexual's unique identity would be subsumed under the umbrella of transgender and they would then cease to be unique. In other words, the public will have little to discriminate between the three classes of transgender people I mentioned above.

My reaction is, "So what?" As long as we all get our right to be who we are protected, does it matter that a transvestite is very different from a transsexual? For that matter, are they really all that different?

Whether you like "transgender" or not, we **are** becoming a community, at long last.

JoAnn Roberts

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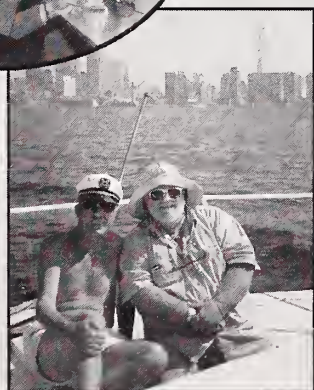
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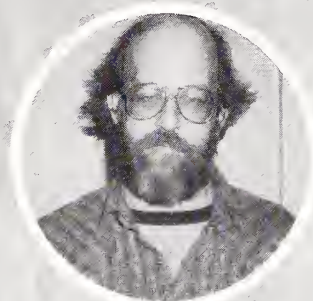


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CDS, the only commercial publisher of non-erotic information for the transgender community, sponsors the Shopping & Resource Center at the Transgender Forum. Here you can buy, online, books, videos, magazines, clothing, wigs, makeup, lingerie, shoes and more from reputable vendors. New stores are opening each month.

Visit The Shopping Mall at <<http://www.cdspub.com/index2.html>>.



The Community Center is our way of putting something back into the transgender community. Here, any not-for-profit organization can have free Web space to promote their organization, list activities and events, and sell memberships or subscriptions to in-house publications.

Go to the Community Center at <<http://www.transgender.org/tg/>>.

The Transgender Forum, The CDS Shopping & Resource Center, and the Community Center are hosted by 3•D Communications, Inc., a community-based WWW service provider. If you'd like information on advertising or opening an electronic storefront, contact JoAnn Roberts at <joann@cdspub.com>. If your not-for-profit organization would like Web space in the Community Center, contact Jamie Fenton at <jamief@zoom.com>.